

Futures: Futures Group Meeting Minutes Posted

Draft minutes from the January 23 meeting are posted on the Mental Health Update web page, along with all but one of the handouts. A 49-page handout on housing, titled "Priced Out in 2004" is posted at <http://www.tacinc.org/index/viewPage43.htm>

Futures: Work Groups Formed; Peer Participation Effort Under Way

Three initiatives came out of the recent Futures Group meeting:

- A housing work group is being formed, supported by Brian Smith of the Health Department staff, to begin work immediately. Members include Ken Libertoff, Linda Corey, Michael Sabourin and Jeff Rothenberg.
- A peer services work group is being formed, supported by Nick Nichols of the Health Department staff, to begin work in the spring.
- Nichols is being assisted by Corey in an effort to increase consumer and family participation in the Futures process.

See January 23 meeting minutes for details.

Futures: Sub-Acute Work Group Minutes Posted

Draft minutes from the January 11 meeting of the sub-acute work group are posted on the Mental Health Update web page.

Futures: Special Meeting

In response to the discussion at the January 23 Futures Group meeting, a special meeting of the group has been called for Wednesday, February 1, to consider Northeast Kingdom Human Services' proposal for a sub-acute recovery facility and to offer advice to the Secretary of Human Services. The meeting will be from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Stanley Hall, Conference Room # 107, State Office Complex, 103 S. Main Street, Waterbury, VT.

Futures: A Few Q&As on NKHS' Proposal

QUESTION: Under 18 V.S.A. 9435, a project such as the one proposed by Northeast Kingdom Human Services (NKHS) is exempt from the BISHCA Certificate of Need requirements, but must obtain approval of the Commissioner of Health. Has approval been given?

ANSWER: Preliminary approval has been given, authorizing NKHS to execute a purchase and sales agreement for the former Lakeview Inn property, subject to NKHS obtaining funding from the State of Vermont and a conditional use permit from the town, and subject to final approval of the NKHS board.

Final approval of the proposal by the Commissioner of Health will be subject to a review of the details of the proposal, which will include a public input process. The logistics of this review are still being worked out by the Department of Health.

Meanwhile, NKHS has reached an agreement with Kathy Hemmens to develop its application for 18 V.S.A. 9435 approval. The timing of the application will depend on the pace of the real estate negotiations and other issues, as well as preliminary agreement on budget details.

QUESTION: Would there be a provision for payment of funds to the town in lieu of property taxes?

ANSWER: The proposal would include a commitment, legally binding if possible, that the property will make payments to the town exactly as if it were not exempt.

QUESTION: When will the staffing and budget details be made public?

ANSWER: Staffing will be consistent with the Futures Groups' clinical care work group's draft memo on the subject, dated January 22, distributed at the January 23 Futures meeting, and posted on the Mental Health Update web page under the January 26 Update.

The proposed budget by NKHS is still under development, and depends significantly on the extent to which the specific needs of the client populations are delineated. As soon as development is complete, the budget will be published, in advance of any public input process under 18 V.S.A. 9435.

QUESTION: Is it definite that only patients from Vermont State Hospital or another involuntary program would be eligible for admission?

ANSWER: This program is targeted to reducing the census at Vermont State Hospital. At startup, therefore, referrals would be accepted only from the state hospital. It is widely acknowledged, however, that this level of care may be appropriate for a larger group than Vermont State Hospital patients; if there is sufficient capacity in the future, the referral sources could be expanded beyond the state hospital.

QUESTION: Would the facility be JCAHO accredited?

ANSWER: No. This facility would be a residential home, licensed as a Therapeutic Community Residence (TCR), and NKHS intends to seek Level III Assistive Community Care Services (ACCS) status.

QUESTION: Would the doors be locked?

ANSWER: The doors would have locks, and, subject to approved protocols and human rights reviews, the doors could be locked at times of heightened risk. The planned

program, however, would not involve the locking of doors except as a safety measure in emergencies. Legalities are still under discussion.

QUESTION: Would residency be voluntary?

ANSWER: It is extremely important that the word “voluntary” be properly defined in this context to avoid misunderstanding. Individuals residing in sub-acute programs could have one of several different legal statuses, some of which are technically involuntary, such as being in the commissioner’s custody while on pre-placement visits or being under orders of non-hospitalization. However, from a clinical or treatment perspective, an individual’s willing participation in the program would be critical to success,

Futures: Actuarial Services Contract Near

Health Department staff hopes to complete a contract within a few days with the preferred respondent to a recent RFP for actuarial services. The contract will be for expert assistance in determining the bed capacities needed for adult psychiatric inpatient services to replace the Vermont State Hospital.

Futures: Architecture+ Questionnaires Due

The Architecture+ questionnaires on inpatient services were due today. As of this afternoon, four responses have been received:

- One filed by Anne Jerman with responses from the nursing staff at Vermont State Hospital.
- One by JoEllen Swaine with responses from social workers at the hospital.
- One by Rutland Regional Medical Center.
- One by Anne Donahue, extracted from consumer responses.

These responses are posted on the Mental Health Update web page. If you have been invited to fill out a questionnaire, please return it as soon as possible.

Architecture+ has contracted to begin design and site selection work for the primary inpatient replacement service and for the smaller capacities recommended by the Futures Group. The questionnaires are posted on the Mental Health Update webpage under January 13 and may be used by anyone wishing to submit information and opinion to support this effort. These questionnaires are quite detailed and include questions about the clinical and medical needs of expected patients, the preferred space arrangements for kitchens, and staffing including all disciplines (nursing, psychology social work). They also have questions addressing the administrative space needs (staff, IT, business etc).

Futures: Architecture+ To Meet With Current, Recent Patients

Representatives of Architecture+ will tour Vermont State Hospital on Friday, March 3, and will meet a focus group of current patients. Efforts are being made to also schedule a meeting with hospital employees. On Tuesday, March 14, the representatives will meet with recent patients at Vermont State Hospital and other hospitals, in a focus group event being organized by Linda Corey.

Futures: Upcoming Meetings

- Sub-acute Rehabilitation and Secure Residential Work Group, Wednesday, February 1, 9–11 a.m., Medical Director's Office, Vermont State Hospital, Waterbury.
- Futures Advisory Group Special Meeting RE: Greensboro, Wednesday, February 1, 11:30 a.m.--1 p.m., Stanley Hall, Conference Room # 107, Waterbury State Office Complex.
- Facilities Work Group meeting with Architecture+, Monday, February 6, 1-4 p.m., Department of Health offices, Room 2A, 108 Cherry Street, Burlington.
- Burlington City Council: briefing by State, FAHC and neighborhood representatives, February 6, evening meeting, time yet to be determined, Contois Auditorium, Burlington City Hall.
- Clinical Care Management Work Group, Friday, February 10, 9–11 a.m., Stanley Hall, Conference Room # 107, Waterbury State Office Complex. PLEASE NOTE CHANGES: February 17 and March 17 meetings at Central Vermont Hospital in Berlin have been changed to February 10 and March 10 at Stanley Hall in Waterbury.

VSH: Bi-weekly Report Filed With Board of Health

Pursuant to conditions of Vermont State Hospital's operating license, the Vermont State Hospital reported in a letter today to the Board of Health that there has been no change in the status of the State's negotiations with the Department of Justice. The communication is posted on the Mental Health Update web page.

VSH Census

The Vermont State Hospital census was 48 as of midnight Thursday night. The average census for the past 45 days was between 47 and 48.

Questions and comments about the Mental Health Update may be directed to John Howland Jr. (howland@vdh.state.vt.us). If you are reading a print version of this Update, you may find the web version at www.healthyvermonters.info/mh/mhindex.shtml

